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A

Letter of Advice

TO THE

CHURCHES

OF THE

Non-conformists

IN THE

English Nation:

Endeavouring their Satisfaction in that POINT,

Who are the True Church of England?

There was a Strife between the Herdmen of Abraham's Cattel, and the Herdmen of Lot's Cattel: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite were yet in the Land, Gen. 13. 7.

Fortasse & in hoc Loco, imperita prævaluit Consuetudo; & aliquid afferri potest, quod adhuc Ignoramus; unde nos magis docere debeat Judicium veritatis, quam præjudicium Consuetudinis. Aug. in Ps. 105.

LONDON,

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There will ſpeedily be Publiſhed,

An Anſwer to Dr. *Scott's Caſes of Conſcience againſt the Diſſenters*, about *Forms of Prayer.*

Sold by A. Baldwin.

UMI

The Publiſher to the READER.

CHildren of Strife there are, who will be ſtraitway ſaying of the Author of this Letter, as Ahab *ſaid of* Ben-hadad; Mark and ſee, how this Man ſeeketh Miſchief. *But, it's agreed that thou thy ſelf be judge what Miſchief he ſeeketh, if thou canſt firſt prevail with thy ſelf to think as follows:* Sick *our Nation is*; Heart-ſick *of Impiety againſt Heaven, and of Animoſity againſt one another.* Sick *and incurable by the Preſident and whole Colledge of our Phyſicians, King, and Parliament.* Sick, and more like to die than live, *unleſs* Vixons *do take better ways to Healing, than* gnawing their Tongues, and refuſing to repent; fretting againſt their God, and their King, *and every thing but Themſelves. In a word, Unleſs the* CHURCH (*as we muſt ſtill ſpeak*) *do revert to her old Orthodoxy, the* DISSENTERS *to their old Purity, and* BOTH *of 'em to the religious Love of their Saviour, and of one another. If this may not be,* the Fire will devour the great Deep; *Contention will deſtroy our populous Countrey,* Amos 7. 4. *Indeed,*

Our State on this Earth is one, but Weak, *and* Tempted. *Religion, as all other Sciences, hath it's Problems and Abſtruſities. Our* Bernards *ſee not all things. Yea, and the moſt of good and honeſt Hearts are Short-ſighted, and cannot ſee to the Well's bottom. No, and (what is much worſe,) it is to be ſaid of the moſt Intelligent, and Devout too,* All mind their own things: *Are too too much ſwayed by Domeſtick Intereſts; inſomuch, that* Peter's *and* Paul's *will claſh. The beſt of* Viators *will* fall

fall out by the way. Offences *will come. And Earth will, never while it ſtands, be quite ſo kind and quiet as Heaven. But,*

Notwithſtanding this, Peace muſt be followed. *Peace with Truth, and for the ſake of Truth. Neceſſity is laid upon us;* neceſſity *of* Precept *and* Means. *Nor want we Encouragement: For our Saviour hath* Bought *it,* Prays *for it, and* Promiſes *it. Yes, and makes it eaſily attainable by all good People, tho' of different Perſuaſions. It's not more eaſie for our Eyes, and Hands, and Feet, to keep from* Mutiny, *than for real Chriſtians to have* Peace *among Themſelves. Becauſe, as they are Members of one another, ſo are Chriſt's Servants: Members of one another in his one* Myſtical Body, *and acted by one and the* ſelf-ſame Spirit. *So that an Arch-Biſhop* Uſher, *and a Preſbyterian, Mr.* Baxter; *a Biſhop* Wilkins, *and an Independent Dr.* Harriſon, *do naturally Love without Diſſimulation, as naturally as the Sun does ſhine, or the Fire burn. Wherefore,*

The Learned and Holy Author of the following Pages, ſeeketh Truth and Peace: Forgive him this Wrong. *It appears not what other* Pardon *he needs. His Style is formed,* ἐκ ἀλλοτρίως ἀλλ' Ἀδελφίκως. *As of Old* Moſes *did, he laboureth to Quiet and Part fairly the Striving* Iſraelites; *not offering to ſmite any but the* Egyptian, *and the* moſt Mercileſs; *and that but by Argument neither. In ſhort, it is engaged on his behalf, that he ſhall publickly* Retract *whatever Errour he ſhall be found to have erred. As far off as he ſtands, there are ſome who hear him ſaying,* (*as the grand Exemplar of Patience ſaid unto the* Temanite,) Teach me, and I will hold my Peace! Cauſe me to know wherein I have Erred.

A LETTER of Advice TO THE Churches of the Non-conformists IN THE English Nation, &c.

Dear Brethren in our Lord,

WHen the Cardinal of *Lorrain* was offended at the Great *Ronsu*, who had been *his Favourite*, for becoming a *Proteſtant*, this Great *Martyr* aſſured him, that he had been infinitely beholden to his *Eminence*, the *Cardinal* himſelf, in that from *him* he had learned the very *Principle* upon which it was that he became a *Proteſtant*; even *this*, That of the *Fifteen Ages*, which had ran out ſince the Aſcenſion of our Saviour, the *firſt* was the *Golden Age*; and the reſt grew ſtill worſe and worſe, the remoter they were from *That*; wherefore, ſaid he, *Aureum ſeculum delegi*.

The ſame Conſideration that made this Great Perſon become a *Proteſtant*, hath produced the Churches of *Non-conformiſts*, which have been *ſprinkled* thro' the *Realm* of *England*, and the *Dominions* thereto pertaining. He that would in the *Doctrine* and the *Diſcipline* of the Church, behold a *Conformity* to the *Golden Age* of *Chriſtianity*, muſt come to the Churches of *Non-conformiſts*, which have needleſly been ſometimes Diſtinguiſhed into *Presbyterian* and

 Congregational,

Congregational, but are now, I hope, losing the Distinction, in that more *Christian* Name of *United Brethren*. While those things in the *Church of England*, whereunto you, *my Brethren*, are *Non-conformists*, were evidently introduced, after the *Golden Age* of *Christianity* (except so far as *Golden Chalices* could make one) was expired, and not until the *Apostacy* which the *Holy Spirit* of Christ *expressly* foretold, had begun very sensibly to operate; you may challenge all sincere Students in *Antiquity*, to mention so much as one thing ordinarily practised in your Churches, for which you have not the Countenance of the *Earliest Antiquity*. You need not have recourse to *Lyndwood*, and *Gallick*, or *Spanish*, or *Saxon Councils*, for the Explaining and Maintaining of the Things used among you: *Clemens Romanus*, and *Ignatius*, *Justin Martyr*, and *Tertullian*, or, if you will, *Cyprian*, shall be your Defenders. Yet after all, I know that you are of the Opinion with the *Ancient* last mentioned, *Consuetudo sine veritate est vetustas erroris*; and, that you will allow the Speech of the Great Lord *Bacon*, to pass for a true Translation of *Cyprian*, *Antiquity without Truth, is a Cypher without a Figure*. That which indeed gives a *Figure* to your Churches, is this, That the *Holy Spirit* of Christ, speaking in the Oracle of the *Holy Scripture*, is the only *Authority*, which 'tis your *Profession* and *Endeavour* to follow, in the regulating of all things among them. Yea, tho' 'twill doubtless be a fault in you, to think that your Churches are come to a *ne plus ultra* in *Reformation*, and that their *Works are perfect before God*, yet there is in them that *Conformity* to the Directions of the Son of God in his Word, which has caused a *Considerable* Person, (*a*) among the *Conformable* Sons of the Church of *England* thus to express himself, (in his Judicious Book about *The Interest of the Princes and States of* Europe) That, *should the Nation be at once emptied of one whole Generation of Non-conformists, so long as the reading of the Bible is suffered, another will Unavoidably and Immediately spring up.*

(*a*) *Slingsby Bethel*, Esq;

Now albeit these two Considerations may be enough to fortifie you against all Discouragements in those *Methods of Christianity*, which you have espoused; and while you have the *Word of Christ*, with the purest of *Christian Antiquity* Har-

Harmonizing to it on your ſide, you need not be any more moved, than a Church *fair as the Moon*, from keeping the *Ordinances of Heaven*, by unreaſonable Noiſe and Clamour; nevertheleſs I know there is one *Cry*, whereby ſome of you are ſometimes Diſcouraged.

You have a Juſt Veneration for that Venerable Name, THE CHURCH OF *ENGLAND*; and a certain Party of Men, in the *Engliſh Nation*, unjuſtly *Monopolizing* that Name unto themſelves, try to perſwade you, that you are no part of the CHURCH OF *ENGLAND*, but miſerable *Schiſmaticks*; yea, and it is well if you can eſcape the Fate of *Infidels*, when once that ſcandalous piece of *Bigotry*, lately advanced, ſhall obtain, *That where there is no Epiſcopal Ordination, there is no true Church Miniſter, Sacrament, or Salvation.* If then you may be perſwaded and convinced, that you are a true Part of the CHURCH OF *ENGLAND*, and as Genuine *Sons of the Church*, as any that call her *Mother*, it may be hoped not only that you will be eſtabliſhed in the *Courſe of Religion*, which you now embrace, but alſo that the Prejudices of your *Angry Brethren*, whereby you have been ſometimes oppoſed, will be happily extinguiſhed.

I am now therefore to undertake your Satisfaction in that Point, which I find particularly the Famous *Baxter* in his Treatiſe of *National Churches*, (*b*) expreſſing in theſe words: (*b*) Ch. 7. § 10.

'The preſent Orthodox Proteſtant *Non-conformiſts*, are as 'truely Members of the *Church of England*, juſtly ſo called, 'as any Dioceſans or Conformiſts in the Land; and if they 'be not better confuted than hitherto they have been, they 'may truly be ſaid to be the Soundeſt, moſt Judicious, moſt 'Conſcionable, and the moſt Peaceable Members of this 'Church. And to deny ſuch *Non-conformiſts* to be True and 'Honourable Parts of the *Church of England*, is but ſuch an 'Effect of *Ignorant Arrogance*, as is the Shame of the Spea-'ker, and implieth ſome *Diſhonourable Definition* of the 'ſaid *Church*. And they that make their mutable *Forms* and '*Ceremonies* Eſſential to the Church, make a *Ceremony* of 'the *Church* it ſelf, and cannot anſwer the *Papiſts*, that 'Challenge us to prove its *Antiquity*; for our *Liturgy* is not 'ſo old as *Luther*'s Time; as *Rome*, by Claiming to be the '*Whole Church*, hath made many think, 'tis not ſo much as

'a *Part*;

'a *Part*; ſo *Conformiſts* calling themſelves the *Whole Church* 'of *England*, have tempted many to take them for no *Part* 'at all.

And it will be ſtrange if this be denied by any Man, that has heard of that ACT OF PARLIAMENT, by which you enjoy your preſent *Liberty* to Worſhip God according to *his Directions*, and your *own Conſciences*. God, by a wondrous *Revolution*, brought unto the *Britiſh Throne*, a *King* and a *Queen*, who have ſignalized their Truly Royal Diſpoſitions, to protect all Diſciples of Chriſt, without regard unto *Different Opinions* in the *Circumſtantials* of the *Common Faith*: An Illuſtrious KING, who hath on all Occaſions diſcovered the Heroick Reſolution, which on the greateſt of Occaſions he once expreſſed unto the *Scotch* Commiſſioners, *Never to be a Perſecutor*: A Renowned QUEEN, who perpetually manifeſted ſuch Princely Deſires of *Union* among all Good Men of diverſe Parties, as once particularly ſhe uttered unto an Eminent Perſon, from whom I had it; *In as much as a Man cannot make himſelf to believe what he will, why ſhould we perſecute one another? I wiſh I could ſee all Good Men of one Mind; but in the mean time I pray let them however Love one another.* The Gracious God bleſſed the Nation at the ſame time with a *Parliament*, who underſtood and conſidered the *Real Intereſt* of the *Nation* in this reſpect. They conſidered, that the *Non-conformiſts* are a People of ſo great Account in the Nation for their *Number*, their *Vertue*, and their *Trade*, that it were a no leſs *Fooliſh* than *Wicked* thing, and all of a piece with the *French Madneſs*, to propound their *Extirpation*. They conſidered, that the *Non-conformiſts* ever joined with the Sober Part of the *Nation* in the Defence of its *Liberties*, againſt the Encroachments of *Arbitrary Government*, while their *worſt Enemies* were generally as *bad Enemies* to the *Engliſh Liberties*, and were the *Men* that ſtickled with might and main to introduce the *Arbitrary Tyranny*, now ſo happily caſt out. Their Majeſties, (whoſe Royal Aſſent unto an Act for the utter Extirpation of *Prelacy* in *Scotland*, hath reſtored *Proſperity* with *Satisfaction* to that *Kingdom*) concurred with this Renowned Parliament in an *Act of Indulgence*, by which the *Non-conformiſts*, who Subſcribe the *Doctrinal Articles* of the *Church*

of

of England, are as much *allowed*, (tho' there be not ſo much *allow'd* unto *them!*) as thoſe that conform to all the *Ceremonies*, yet wanting a *Reformation* in it. Wherefore by *Act of Parliament*, your *Churches* are now as *legal Parts* of the *Church of* England, as if you all uſed the invented Sacrament of the *Croſs*, or bow'd at the Name of *Jeſus*. 'Tis true, the *Eccleſiaſtical Benefices* are ſtill engroſſed by the more *Conformable* and *Ceremonious* Clergy; and let a Man be never ſo *Learned*, never ſo *Loyal*, and never ſo capable of ſerving the *King* or the *Church*, yet, except he will engage to ſerve the *Mitre*, he is not thought worthy of any *Preferment*, or *Employment*; nevertheleſs the *Law of* England, which is all that has given the *Church* of *England* its *political Conſtitution*, has alſo made *you* the *True Members* of it: And His Majeſty, who is the *Supream Head* and *Governour of the Church of* England, hath declared you to be ſuch *Members* of it, as are worthy of His Royal *Protection*: Yea, by *Law*, your Churches are not only *protected* with a Penalty on all that ſhall give you *open Diſturbances*, but *Rewarded* alſo with the Exemption of *your* Miniſters from *civil Encumbrances*. But if this happy *Revolution* had never happened, yet ſo long as the *Church* of *England* will by reaſonable Men, be reckon'd no other than the *Body of Chriſtian People in* England, I hope none will deny *you* to be *part* of that Church; for, I am ſure, none can deny *you* to be as much a *Chriſtian People* as any upon that Iſland. The Monſters of late ſo horribly multiplied, who Deride, and Blaſpheme, and Caſt off the holy *Religion* of CHRIST, are not of *your Communion*. And, beſides all this, if the *Church* of *England* confeſs, and aſſert *yours* to be *True Churches* of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, I do not ſee how it can queſtion your being *true Parts* of it ſelf. It will not be for the Honour of the *Church* of *England*, that it ſhould be ſaid, There is a *Viſible Church of Chriſt* in *England*, which is no Part of it. Now the *Church* of *England* has given us this for the *Nineteenth* of its famous *Thirty Nine* Articles: *The Viſible Church of Chriſt is a Congregation of faithful Men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly miniſtred according to Chriſt's Ordinance in all thoſe things, that of neceſſity are requiſite to the ſame*: And that

the *pure Word of God is preached*, and the *Sacraments administred with all that is of neceſſity requiſite unto them* in your *Congregations*, I ſuppoſe 'tis inconteſtable. That Man who denies it, muſt be far gone in *Bigotry* and *Impudence*.

But that you may more particularly apprehend your Claim to be the very CHURCH OF ENGLAND, I will in ſeveral Particulars deſcribe to you the *True Church of* England, and make it evident, that thoſe things wherein you are *Diſſenters*, are maintained rather by a *New Church*, (and I had almoſt uſed a harder word) than by that, which the honourable Name of the *Church* of *England* originally belongs unto.

We will begin, as 'tis fitting we ſhould make our Beginning, with the DOCTRINE of the *Church*. 'Tis moſt certain, That the *Doctrine* of the *Church* of *England* contained in its *Thirty Nine Articles*, is that which a great Part of the Clergy, now engroſing the Name of the *Church* of *England*, explode the literal ſenſe of. There are certain glorious *Truths* held by the *True Church of* England. *e. g.*

ART. 17.

'*Predeſtination* to Life, is the everlaſting purpoſe of God, 'whereby (before the Foundations of the World were laid) 'he hath conſtantly decreed by his Counſel, ſecret to us, to 'deliver from Curſe and Damnation thoſe whom he hath 'choſen in Chriſt out of Mankind, and to bring them by 'Chriſt to everlaſting Salvation, as Veſſels made to Honour. 'Wherefore they that be endued with ſo excellent a Benefit 'of God, be called according to God's purpoſe by his Spirit, 'working in due ſeaſon; they thro' Grace obey the Calling; 'they be juſtified freely; they be made the Sons of God by 'Adoption; they be made like the Image of his only begot-'ten Son Jeſus Chriſt; they walk religiouſly in good Works; 'and at length by God's Mercy, they attain to everlaſting 'Felicity. The godly conſideration of *Predeſtination*, and our '*Election* in Chriſt, is full of ſweet, pleaſant, and unſpeak-'able comfort to godly Perſons.

ART.

ART. 18.

'They are to be had *Accurſed*, that preſume to ſay, That 'every Man ſhall be ſaved by the Law or Sect which he 'profeſſeth, ſo that he be diligent to frame his Life accor-'ding to that Law, and the Light of Nature; for holy Scri-'pture doth ſet out unto us only the Name of Jeſus Chriſt 'whereby Men muſt be ſaved.

ART. 10.

'The Condition of Man after the Fall of *Adam*, is ſuch, 'as that he cannot turn and prepare himſelf by his own na-'tural Strength, and good Works, to Faith and Calling upon 'God. Wherefore we have no power to do good Works 'pleaſant and acceptable to God, without the Grace of God 'by Chriſt preventing us, that we may have a good Will, 'and working with us when we have that good Will.

ART. 11.

'We are accounted *Righteous* before God, only for the 'Merit of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, by Faith, and 'not for our own Works and Deſervings; wherefore that 'we are *juſtified by Faith only*, is a moſt wholeſom Do-'ctrine, and very full of Comfort.

ART. 13.

'Works done before the Grace of Chriſt, and the Inſpirati-'on of his Spirit, are not pleaſant to God, foraſmuch as they 'ſpring not of Faith in Jeſus Chriſt; neither do they make 'Men meet to receive Grace, or (as the School-Authors ſay) 'deſerve *Grace of Congruity*; yea, rather for that they are 'not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be 'done, we doubt not but they have the Nature of *Sin*.

ART.

ART. 29.

'The wicked, and such as be void of a lively Faith, al-'tho' they do carnally and visibly press with the Teeth, (as 'St. *Augustine* saith,) the Sacrament of the Body and Blood 'of Christ; yet in no wise are they partakers of *Christ*, but 'rather to their Condemnation do *eat* and *drink* the Sign 'and Sacrament of so great a thing.

Behold, Sirs, the *Faith* of the *True Church of* England! A *Faith*, which when it is betray'd by any *Church*, *Christianity* it self is betray'd, and such a *Church* becoming *offensive* to the Almighty Lord Jesus Christ, cannot be far from *Marks of his Displeasure set upon it.* And, I am very sure, that this *Faith* is no where maintained with more *Purity* and *Constancy* than it is in the Churches of the *Non-Conformists:* Doubtless 'tis a *Mystery* unto *you*, *my Brethren*, to find these *Articles* commonly and publickly reviled with pretended *Confutations* in the Writings of those very Men that have subscribed these *Articles*; and being by their *subscription* qualified for *Benefices*, run away with the Name of the only *Church of* England. Your *Simplicity*, doubtless, cannot comprehend this *Mystery*, that the Men who have *subscribed* these very *Articles*, can in defiance of their *Subscription*, write and rail against them, and be for *that very Cause*, counted worthy of the best *Preferments* in the *Church* of *England*, when *you* that *contend earnestly for them*, are made utterly uncapable of the least *Imployments*, meerly because you scruple some *Invented Rituals.* I would put it unto the Consciences of some thousands that now enjoy the *Ecclesiastical Benefices*, whether they would not make a *Tragical out-cry* upon it, if they were deprived of their *Benefices*, and shut out of the Church of *England*, for the *Non-Conformity* of their Judgments to the *Faith of the Church*, in the *Five Points* of the Doctrine of *Grace?* I will not now bestow upon those *Pelagian Enemies* to the Church of *England*, the Brand that justly belongs unto them, for the *Dissimulation* with which they have *subscribed* these *Articles* of the Church; albeit, for Men to *subscribe* these *Articles*, and

and they to make this Apology for their denying and oppoſing of them, *That they ſubſcribed them not as Articles of Faith, but as Articles of Peace*; many will tell you, it muſt be with an *Equivocation*, than which no *Jeſuit* can uſe a greater: And ſome will enquire, Whether in *Aſia* and *Africa*, a Man might not with as much Honeſty *ſubſcribe* the *Alcoran*? Which I the rather mention, becauſe it begins to be publiſhed, (not by any of *your* Communion,) That for to make a *good Chriſtian* and a *Member of the Church*, there is required no more than that a Man believe *Jeſus of Nazareth to be the Meſſiah*; and yet this is a thing many times over expreſly acknowledged in the *Alcoran*. All that I will ſay, is, That while things continue thus, it will be impoſſible to hinder Mankind from thinking, that a few *invented Rituals*, are with ſome of more value than all the glorious *Doctrines of Grace*, and thoſe invaluable Treaſures of *Evangelical Truth*, which the *Church of England* is enriched withal. We will not now take the invidious Pains to gather up the numberleſs Paſſages of *Arminian* Stuff, directly contrary to theſe *Articles* of the *Church of England*, which occur in the *Pamphlets* of the Divines, that would be thought the only Darlings and Champions of the *Church*. But this is notorious to the World, that ſo far as a full *Aſſent* and *Conſent* unto this *Doctrine* of the *Church of England* can make *you* ſo; (and I ſee not why it ſhould *not* make you ſo;) you, *my Brethren*, are the moſt ſincere *Parts* of that *Church*. Yea, in many places, and particularly where the Writer of this Letter lives, a Man cannot hear the *Doctrine* of the *Church of England* preached, except he go to *your Churches* for it. And except ſome amazing Work of Heaven prevent it, the *Doctrine* of the *Church of England* will be preſerved no where but in *your Churches*; and I pray God, that at leaſt it may be preſerved *There*. The *Old* and the *True Church of England*, as it had the ſame Sentiment of *Calviniſm* with *you*, ſo it honoured the Name of *Calvin*, as an *excellent Inſtrument of God for the clearing and ſpreading of his Truth*; (c) and reſented the Reproaches caſt upon that *Man of God*, as thro' the ſides of *Calvin*, *ſtriking at the Throat and Heart of our Religion*. (Such are the Expreſſions in the Books Dedicated to K. *James* I.) And you

(c) So Dr. *Carlton*, Dr. *Hakewel*, Dr. *Hoyl*, *&c.* in their Immortal Writings.

you take the famous Dr. *Du Moulin* to be not a jot the leſs *a Church of* England *Man*, for going out of the World with that Lamentation, *ſince* Calviniſm *is decried in* England, [*Actum eſt de Religione Chriſti apud Anglos,*] *Chriſtianity it ſelf will be in danger to be loſt in the* Engliſh *Nation.* But the *Non-conformiſts* cannot be ſincere Members of the *Church of England*, becauſe they do not acknowledge the *Divine Right* of the Modern DIOCESAN EPISCOPACY. No! I pray, why not? Let us a little enquire into the Judgment of the *Old* and the *True Church of England* upon this matter, and it will preſently appear, that *you* are far more of the *Church of England*, than thoſe *Fanaticks* (of late ſo much increaſed,) that not only advance the *Jus Divinum* of their *Dioceſan Epiſcopacy*, but alſo queſtion the validity of the *Sacraments* adminiſtred by any that have not received their *Ordination* from it. Albeit the preſent *Form of making and conſecrating Biſhops, Prieſts, and Deacons*, aſſerts, That *Biſhops* and *Prieſts* are *diſtinct Orders*, and they muſt be publiſhed as *Excommunicate*, who affirm, *That this Book does contain any thing in it repugnant to the Word of God:* Yet, *my Brethren, from the Beginning it was not ſo.* Behold, *The Church of England* it ſelf ſtands *Excommunicate* by its own *Canons*, as much as *you*. It is notorious, that the *Dioceſan Epiſcopacy* and the National Church-Government by *Biſhops*, was never own'd to be *Jure Divino* until K. *James* I. came to be King of *England*. It was *he*, who upon the Enchantments of *Bancroft*, firſt yielded unto *that*, which his Predeceſſors would never have endured. (*d*) Even in King *Elfrick*'s days, (*e*) the *Church of England* plainly denied *Biſhops* and *Prieſts* to be *diſtinct Orders*. But I will not carry you back to ſuch *early Days*. In the Days of King *Henry* the Eighth, *Tindal* (*f*) expreſly maintained, 'That the Apoſtles following the 'Rule of Chriſt, ordained in his Kingdom and Congregation '*Two Officers*; one called *Biſhop*, which ſame was called '*Prieſt* and *Elder*; and another called *Deacon*. All that 'were called *Elders* or *Prieſts* (he ſays,) were called *Bi-*'*ſhops* alſo. Thus wrote the *Martyr* who was own'd by his Enemies themſelves, *Homo doctus, pius, & bonus.*

(*d*) See this proved in Mr. *Lobs's True Diſſenter*, Chap. 1.

(*e*) *Spelman*, p. 576 l. 17.

(*f*) In his *Practice of Popiſh Prelates.*

Lambert

Lambert expreſly maintained, (*g*) 'That in the *Primi-* (*g*) In *Acts and Mon.* Vol. 2
'*tive Church* there were no more Officers than *Biſhops* and '*Deacons*; and *Hierom* ſaith, Thoſe we call *Prieſts* are all one, 'and no other but *Biſhops*, and the *Biſhops* none other but *Prieſts*. 'One of the *Articles* againſt *Barnes*, was (*h*) his holding, That (*h*) *Ibid.* 'they who in one place are called *Epiſcopi*, or *Biſhops*, you 'ſhall find in many that they be called *Presbyteri*, or *El-* '*ders*; and that according to *Athanaſius*, every City ſhould 'have its *proper Paſtor*; and according to *Chryſoſtom*, the 'Teachers were not to be diſtracted with the governing '*many Churches*, but have the Care and Charge of *one* '*Church* only. And this Perſuaſion wherein *you* thus follow your Fathers, the Bleſſed *Martyrs* of the *Church of England*, at laſt prevailed ſo far, that *Cranmer* himſelf, with others, embraced it. Yea, 'twas not long before this became a Point eſtabliſhed by Authority; and, in *The neceſſary Erudition of a Chriſtian Man*, a Book then publiſhed by Authority, as the Doctrine of the *Church of England*, it is expreſly affirmed, *That of theſe two Orders only* [Prieſts and Deacons] *Scripture makes expreſs mention.* The (*i*) Declaration about the *Inſtitution of Biſhops and Prieſts*, then alſo ſubſcribed by the brave Lord *Cromwel* and the *Archbiſhops* of *Canterbury* and *York*, and other *Biſhops* and *Civilians*, denied any *Superiority* of a *Biſhop* above a *Prieſt*, to be found in the *New Teſtament*, and allow'd unto a *Prieſt* the Power of *Ordination*, and of *Excommunication*. In the very firſt Year of *Edward* the Sixth's Reign, there was an *Act of Parliament*, which (*k*) as *Heylin* complains, forced the *Epiſcopal Order* from their ſtrong hold of *Divine Inſtitution*, and made them no other than the *King's Miniſters only*. Dr. *Poinet*, the Biſhop of *Winchester*, then writing againſt *Gardiner*, ſhews, That the *Reformers* in thoſe Days, were willing even to lay aſide the Name of *Biſhop*, and ſay *Elder* inſtead of it. And the incomparable *Cranmer* in his Reſolutions to the King's Queſtions, approved by other *Biſhops*, has theſe expreſs Words, (*l*) *The Biſhops and Prieſts were not two diſtinct things, but both one Office in the beginning of Chriſt's Religion*; and he farther makes it manifeſt, that the great Reformers owned not *Epiſcopacy* as a *diſtinct Order* from *Presbytery* to be of *Divine Right*, but only as a prudent

(*i*) See the *Addenda* to Dr. *Burnet's Hiſtory of Reformation*, p. 321.

(*k*) Hiſtory of *Edward* VI. p. 51.

(*l*) *Reſol.* to Q. 10.

prudent conſtitution of the *Magiſtrate* for the better governing of the *Church*. *Beacon* alſo, a famous Proteſtant Refugee in Q. *Mary*'s time, in his *Catechiſm*, dedicated to both *Archbiſhops*, puts the Queſtion, *What difference is there between a Biſhop and a Presbyter?* And anſwers, *None at all; their Office is the ſame, their Authority and Power is one.* Upon the revival of the *Reformation*, at Q. *Elizabeth*'s coming to the Crown, the moſt acknowledged and celebrated Writers of the *Church of England*, ſtill made the very ſame Conceſſion. Dr. *Alley*, the Biſhop of *Exeter*, in his *Miſcellanea*, (*m*) proves, both from the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, and from the *Epiſtle to the Philippians*, That the Scriptures make no difference between *Biſhops* and *Elders*; and he ſays, That before *Factions*, by the inſtinct of the Devil, began in Religion, the Churches were governed with the *Common Council of the Prieſts*, or *Elders*. Dr. *Pilkinton*, Biſhop of *Dureſme*, in his *Confutation* of the *Addition*, affirms, That the Priviledges and Superiorities which *Biſhops* have above other *Miniſters*, be *rather granted by Man for maintaining of Quietneſs in the Commonwealth, than commanded by God in his Word.* The rare Dr. *Whitaker*, (*n*) making his Remarks on *Jerom*'s Confeſſion, That the *Difference* between *Presbyters* and *Biſhops*, was brought in by *Men* long after the *Apoſtles*, as a Remedy againſt *Schiſm*; aſſures us, *That it is a Remedy worſe than the Malady.* And Biſhop *Morton* (*o*) tells the Papiſts, That the Power of *Order* and of *Juriſdiction* which they aſcribe to *Biſhops*, doth *De Jure Divino*, belong to all other *Presbyters*. But, that I may ſuperſede a vaſt Number of other Quotations to this purpoſe, let it ſuffice, That the Excellent Biſhop *Jewel* delivers this not as his private Opinion, but as the ſenſe of the *Church of England*: (*p*) 'In Saint *Jerom*'s time, (ſaith 'he,) there were *Metropolitans*, *Arch-Biſhops*, *and Arch-'Deacons*, and others; but Chriſt appointed not theſe *Di-'ſtinctions* of *Orders* from the Beginning. This is the thing 'which we defend. St. *Jerom* ſaith, *Let Biſhops under-'ſtand, that they are in Authority over Prieſts, more by 'cuſtom than by order of God's Truth. Eraſmus* ſpeaking of 'the Times of *Jerom*, ſaith, *Id temporis idem erat Epiſco-'pus, Sacerdos & Presbyter*; theſe three Names, *Biſhops*, 'Prieſt,

(*m*) *Alley's Poor Man's Library.* Tom. 1. p. 95, 96.

(*n*) *De Eccleſ. Regim.* cont. 4. q. 1. §. 29. p. 540. col. 2.

(*o*) *Apol. Cathol.* l. 1. c. 21. p. 55.

(*p*) *Apol.* Part 2. ch. 3. Div. 5.

'*Prieſt*, and *Presbyter* at that time were all one; and unto 'this Teſtimony of *Jerom*, the *Biſhop* adds that of St. *Auſtin*, 'That the Office of a *Biſhop* is above the Office of a *Prieſt*, 'not by Authority of the *Scripture*, but after the Names of 'Honour, which the *Cuſtom* of the *Church* hath now ob-'tained. Yea, Archbiſhop *Whitgift* himſelf, ſpeaking of the Government of the *Church of England* by *Biſhops*, in his time, (*q*) ſays, 'It is well known, that the Manner and 'Form of *Government* uſed in the *Apoſtles Time*, and expreſ-'ſed in the *Scripture*, is *not now obſerved*; but hath of ne-'ceſſity been altered; and that any one kind of *external* 'Government perpetually to be obſerved, is no where in the '*Scripture* preſcribed unto the Church, but the Charge 'thereof is left unto the *Magiſtrate*. *Neither do I know* '(ſaith he,) *any Learned Man of a contrary Judgment.*

(*q*) Tract. 17. ch. 2. Dio. 29.

You ſee, Sirs, that *Cranmer* and *Jewel*, and the Chief of the *Reformers*, are as good as *Excommunicated* by the *New Church of England*; but *you* will, I know, readily receive them into your Communion, and may now in this Point value your ſelves, as being of the ſame *Church of England* with *them*. Indeed very few of the *Biſhops* themſelves aſſerted any other than what *you* aſſert about this matter, until all things were to be put into the hands of a *Party*, that in purſuance of certain *ſecret Articles*, were to effect an Accommodation with *Rome*; and then by the *Jus Divinum* of *Prelacy*, the Power of *Oppoſition* muſt be taken out of the hands of the *Inferiour Clergy*, who generally abhorred that *vile Deſign*. But it hath ever ſince been growing upon the Nation: (*) Tho' I am informed the preſent Learned Biſhop of *Salisbury* hath learnedly and couragiouſly appeared on *your* ſide againſt it. (†) We will then paſs to another *Article*, *viz.* That of your DISCIPLINE, which is too ſevere a thing to be allowed by ſome that would be offended, if you ſhould not allow *them* to be the only *Church of England*. It will doubtleſs be as great a *Satisfaction* as *Vindication*, for you to find the *True Church of England* approving and applauding that very *Diſcipline* which is in *your* Churches practiſed: Now we all know what the *Liturgy* of the *Church of England* requires of all its *Communicants*: 'Examine your Lives and Converſations by the

(*) See Def. of Mr. *Hemy* of *Schiſm*, p. 35.

(†) Vind. of the Church of *Scotland*, p. 306.

'Rule of God's Commandment, [These are the expreſs Words in the *Order for the Adminiſtration of the Lord's Supper*:] 'And whereinſoever ye ſhall perceive your ſelves to have 'offended, either by Will, Word, or Deed, bewail your 'own ſinfulneſs, and confeſs your ſelves to Almighty God, 'with full purpoſe of amendment of Life. And if ye ſhall 'perceive your Offences to be ſuch as are not only againſt 'God, but alſo againſt your Neighbours, then ye ſhall recon-'cile your ſelves unto them. If any of you be a Blaſphemer 'of God, an Hinderer, or Slanderer of his Word, an Adul-'terer, or be in Malice, or Envy, or any other grievous Crime, 'repent you of your Sins, or elſe come not unto that Holy 'Table, leſt after the taking of that Holy Sacrament, the '*Devil* enter into you as he entred into *Judas*, and *bring* '*you to Deſtruction both of Body and Soul.*

Now, *my Brethren*, all the *ſtrictneſs* uſed in your Churches about the *Terms* and *Ways* of admiſſion to the *Lord's Table* with you, is nothing more nor leſs but a *Trial* of your *Communicants*, whether they have thoſe Qualifications which the *Liturgy* of the *Church of England* hath preſcribed. Indeed, in ſome of your *Churches* the *Candidates* of the Communion have not their *Admiſſion*, without certain *Publick Circumſtances* of expreſſing their conſent unto the *Covenant of Grace*. But this is no more than what I find the more pious Divines in the *Church of England* wiſhing and writing for. And one of them not Seven Years ago, hath publiſhed his Mind in theſe Terms: (*r*) 'Would it not very 'much conduce to the Honour of God, and the Edification 'of the People, in their moſt holy Faith, if every Perſon 'baptized into the Chriſtian Faith, ſhould be obliged, when 'he comes to Years of Diſcretion, to appear in the Publick 'Congregation, there to make a *Confeſſion of his Faith*, to 'recognize his Primitive Engagement, to avow that in his 'own *Perſon* which was done for him by *Proxy*; and that 'the Miniſter of the Congregation ſhould recommend the 'Perſon to the Grace of God. I durſt ſay, that the ſtrict Churches of *New-England* it ſelf, which wiſely chuſe to be as *explicite* as may be, in managing their *Church-matters*, do not ask for any thing more than what this Learned Son of the *Church of England* has thus propounded. And where-

(*r*) *Snoden's* Plea for Abatement, P. 41.

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as *you* are for maintaining a *Godly Diſcipline* in your Churches towards thoſe who ſcandalouſly break the Laws of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is *this* any more than the very *Common-Prayer-Book* of the *Church of England* has encouraged ? You know that the firſt Words of the *Commination againſt Sinners* in that Book, are theſe: 'Brethren, in the *Primitive Church* 'there was a *Godly Diſcipline*, that ſuch Perſons as ſtood 'Convicted of notorious Sin, were put unto *open Penance*; '---- inſtead whereof, until the ſaid *Diſcipline* may be *re-* 'ſtored again, *which is much to be wiſhed*, it is thought good 'that at this time ſhould be read the General Sentences of 'God's Curſing againſt impenitent Sinners. Now, I hope, you will not be denied your being a part of the *Church of England*, meerly becauſe you have actually *Reſtored* that which the *Church of England* adviſes us, *It were much to be wiſhed* that it might be *reſtored*. I believe the Churches of *New-England* it ſelf, in their *Plat-form of Church Diſcipline*, have not a more ſevere Paſſage than that in the *Homilies* of the *Church of England*: (*s*) 'According to the Example 'of our Saviour Chriſt, and the Primitive Church, which 'was moſt holy and godly, and in the which *due Diſci-* 'pline with ſeverity was againſt the wicked, open Offen- 'ders, were not admitted unto the uſe of the Holy *Sacra-* 'ment with other true Chriſtians, until they had done open 'Penance before the whole Church: And this was practi- 'ſed not only upon *mean* Perſons, but alſo upon the Rich, 'Noble, and Mighty. Behold, Sirs, *your Diſcipline* is by the *Church of England* it ſelf, called, *A due Diſcipline*. The *Church of England* having thus allowed your *Diſci-pline*, I hope now a few CEREMONIES, which by its own confeſſion were never *Inſtituted* by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, will never be counted ſo *Eſſential* to it, that for the *want thereof* you muſt be caſt out of doors. Believe it, Sirs, an *Houſe* built meerly upon *Ceremonies*, or Parts and Means of *Worſhip*, not *Inſtituted* in the *Sayings of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, will doubtleſs one Day ſuffer a *Storm* wherein it will *Fall, and great will be the Fall of it*. But that for your averſion to the *Uninſtituted Ceremonies*, you may have as clear a Direction from the *Church of England* as may be, I deſire to be informed, Whether the *Confeſſion*.

(*s*) The Second Part of the *Homily* of *The Right uſe of the Church.*

feſſion of Faith in an hundred Articles on the *Creed*, compoſed by Dr. *Hooper*, the excellent Biſhop of *Gloceſter*, were not *then* agreeable to the ſenſe of the *Church?* Now in the *Eighty-fifth* of theſe Articles there is this remarkable Paſſage: 'They are not only *Idolaters* which worſhip and 'ſerve *Idols*, and *ſtrange Gods*, as the *Ethnicks*, and ſuch 'like, but alſo all thoſe that worſhip and ſerve the true 'God of Heaven, *after their own Fantaſie*, or *after the Tra-* '*ditions of Men*, without Faith, without the Word of God, 'and *otherwiſe than God hath commanded them.* This is indeed a *terrible Paſſage*; and it is the Terrour of what is in it, that hath made *you* to be what you are: But it is none of *you*, 'tis a very Reverend Biſhop of the *Church of England* that hath written it; and in the ſame *Confeſſion* hath he alſo written, 'That upon pain of *deadly Sin*, to forbid 'and command things that indeed are but *Indifferent*, is the 'only Note and Mark by which to know *Antichriſt*. Our more conformable Friends in the *Church of England* hear not *you* calling them *Idolaters*, and yet *they*, as well as *you*, will own, That the *Surplice* made an Appurtenance of Divine Worſhip, the *Croſs* in *Baptiſm*, and *Kneeling* before the *Euchariſt*, and the like, are things introduced in the *Service of the true God of Heaven, after their own Fantaſie, and after the Traditions of Men, and without the Word of God, and otherwiſe than God hath Commanded.* If therefore you decline ſuch things, the *Church of England* will certainly excuſe you, while you have the *Confeſſion of Faith* publiſhed by its own *Biſhops*, thus charming you ſo to do; eſpecially ſince there are of the *Biſhops* Dr. *Taylor* for one, who acknowledged, That the *Sign of the Croſs*, as now retained, is a *Part of external Worſhip*, tho' it be an *Uninſtituted Ceremony.* The *Church of England*, with all *Proteſtants*, will grant you, That all *Worſhip* of God, not *appointed*, is *unlawful*; and that no *Power on Earth* can add any thing to the *Worſhip* of God. Dr. *Sherlock (t)* himſelf will grant you, 'That ſuch *ſignificant Ceremonies* as are 'meerly for *Signification* in the Chriſtian Religion, do on-'ly *obſcure* and *debaſe*, and are only fit for the Entertain-'ment of *Children.* And *you*, finding that the *Ceremonies* now uſed by the Conformable in the *Church of England*, are

(t) Anſwer to *Prot. Reconciler*, p. 56.

are uſed and urged as *direct Expreſſions* of the reverence of the Heart unto God, cannot look on them as any other than *Parts of external Worſhip*, the *Invention* whereof is forbidden in the *Second Commandment*. Now, if you are delivered from the *Yoke* of theſe unhappy *Ceremonies*, I know not why you ſhould thereby come to be by the *Church of England* worſe looked upon than the moſt famous Divines of that *Church*, who in their beſt Writings are ſtill groaning for a *Deliverance*. Will the *Church of England* renounce Biſhop *Bilſon* for ſaying, 'That the *Reformed Churches* are 'ſo far from admitting the *full Doſe* of the Hereſies of the 'Papiſts, that by no means they can digeſt a *Dram* of *their* 'Ceremonies? Will they renounce Dr. *Humphrey*, for ſaying, 'That we ought to refuſe to conform unto the Enemies of 'God in any of their *Ceremonies*, and that he wiſhed and 'hoped for the utter aboliſhing of all the Monuments of 'Popiſh Superſtition which yet remain in our Church? 'Will they renounce Dr. *More* for ſaying, That, 'It is an 'Antichriſtian uſe of Church-Government, to direct it unto 'the upholding of *Scandalous Ceremonies*, and the enſnaring Inventions of Men? A thouſand more ſuch Paſſages occur in the Writings of the Divines, who have all along been reputed the *Fathers* of the *Church of England*. (*u*) Will the Church now renounce theſe Divines? Let them! And *you*, my Brethren, I am confident, will be glad of their Company. But I ſuppoſe there is another thing that a little ſtumbles you; and that is this: If *Conformity* to the *Ceremonies* be neceſſary to render one a *Church of England Man*, why ſhould not *Non-conformity* exclude *one* as well as another from that Character? *Supra-conformity* is no leſs *Non-conformity* than *Subter-conformity*. Multitudes in *England* continually *Go beyond* the Rule of *Conformity*; why ſhould not theſe be *Non-conformiſts* as well as they that *fall ſhort* of it? It is Enacted, 'That no Form 'or Order of Common-Prayer, Adminiſtration of Sacraments, 'Rites, Ceremonies, ſhall be openly uſed in any Church, 'Chapel, or other publick Place, of or in any Colledge or 'Hall, in either of the Univerſities, the Colledges of *Weſtminſter*, *Wincheſter*, or *Eaton*, or any of them, other than 'what is preſcribed and appointed to be uſed in and by

(*u*) See a Collection in *Delaun's* Plea for the Nonconformiſts.

'the Book of *Common Prayer*. Now in that Book, there are no where found ſeveral *Ceremonies* now practiſed, nor *Orders* uſed in many of the *publick Churches*. *Non-conformity* being indeed nothing but a varying from the Rule eſtabliſhed; the *Addition* made by ſome to that Rule, one would think ſhould be *Non-conformity*, as well as the *Subſtraction* made by others: And the Churches that perform the Worſhip of Chriſt with *Organs* be *Non-conformiſts* as well as they that omit the *Croſs*, and ſome other Superfluities. I'll only touch upon this *One Inſtance* inſtead of many; the *Rubrick* requires, That the *Communion-Table* ſhall ſtand in the *Body of the Church*, or in the *Chancel*, and the *Prieſt ſhall ſtand at the North-ſide of the Table*; ſo making it a *Table* according to the other Churches of the *Reformation*; (which accordingly they obſerve in the *Temple*, where the *Law* is beſt underſtood and practiſed;) and yet in oppoſition to Authority in moſt places, they ſet it *North* and *South*, clapping it unto the Wall at the *Eaſt-end* of the Church, with *Rails* before it, as if (according to the Church of *Rome*,) it were an *Altar*. This is *contrary to the Law*; and I have read, 'This one thing may well be 'thought for to have given Encouragement unto the *Non-* '*conformiſts* in ſome other caſes. Briefly, If you muſt be *no Part* of the *Church of England*, becauſe you don't *kneel* at the *Communion*, I pray let the *Prieſt* who does not *ſtand* where by the Law of *Conformity* he ought to *ſtand* at the *Communion*, be diſcarded alſo! Tho' furious Bigots for *Conformity* will give no Anſwer but *Railing* to all of this *Reaſon*; yet *you*, *my Brethren*, will calmly afford a reaſonable Attention to it. But you muſt by the way be prevailed withal to ceaſe *wondring* at ſuch *Contradictions*. If they ſeem wonderful to you, you'll find continual Matter of Wonderment: For inſtance, The Scripture commands us, *Be not forgetful to entertain Strangers*; but the *Apocrypha* contradicts it, *Eccleſ.* 11. 34. diſſuading us from *Receiving a Stranger into our Houſe*. The Scripture commands us, *Love your Enemies*, *do good to them that hate you*; *be like your heavenly Father*, *who makes the Sun to riſe upon the evil and the good*; but the *Apocrypha* contradicts it, *Eccleſ.* 12. 4, 7. *Give to the godly Man*, *and help not a Sinner*;

Sinner; and again, *Give to the Good, and help not the Sinner.* No Argument could prevail with our *Unreformables* to expunge theſe Leſſons; but in the Month of *October* theſe Leſſons of the *Apocrypha* muſt be read as the *Doctrines* of the *Church of England:* And then you muſt ſubſcribe, That *nothing is ordained to be read, but the very pure Words of God, or that which is agreeable to them.* An abundance of ſuch *Contradictions* will accoſt you, in *that* which with a *Contradiction* equal to the reſt, would be call'd, *The only Church of England.*

If it be now objected againſt *you*, That the *Diſlike of the* COMMON-PRAYER is a thing that will utterly debar you from any Part in the *Church of England*; it will be no Defence for you to plead, That Old King *James* himſelf, a great Patron to the *Church of England*, called the *Common-Prayer*, An *ill-ſaid Maſs in Engliſh*; for he was yet with the *Kirk of Scotland* when he ſo called it. But you may defend your ſelves by this, That ſeveral *Biſhops* in the *Church of England*, namely, *Williams*, *Prideaux*, *Brownrig*, *Hacket*, with Arch-Biſhop *Uſher* in the Head of them, diſliked the *Common-Prayer* ſo much, as to preſent unto the Engliſh Parliament no leſs than *Thirty-five* Exceptions againſt ſeveral things in it, calling for a *Reformation.* If *their Exceptions* did not forfeit their Claim to be of the *Church*, why ſhould *yours?*

Perhaps they'll complain of you, That you do not uſe the LORD's PRAYER as a *Form.* If they do, you may ſtop the Complaint, by citing to them not only an Army of the *Ancients*, but one who has been a great Oracle to the *Church of England*, even *Grotius* himſelf, declaring, That our *Lord bound not his Diſciples to the uſe of thoſe Words and Syllables.* If he *did*, why does the *Church of England* it ſelf preſume to *alter* them? In the *Common-Prayer-Book* the Form ſtill is, *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes as we forgive them that Treſpaſs againſt us.* The *Church of England* herein varies from the Words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: In *Matthew* his Words are, *Forgive us our Debts as we forgive our Debtors:* In *Luke* his Words are, *Forgive us our Sins, for we forgive every one that is indebted unto us.* Why muſt *you* be tyed unto a *Form* of Words? The *Church*

of

of England, even when moſt pretending to a *Form*, will not be tyed, even to *That* for which there is the moſt pretence. The *Infatuation* diſcovered by the *Common-Prayer* thus altering the Form and Phraſe of the *Lord's-Prayer*, deſerves to be conſidered! It may be, when you have ſilenced ſome of theſe froward *Children* in *Chriſtianity*, from inſiſting on all their other *Impertinencies*, they will ſtill refuſe to viſit *your* Aſſemblies, becauſe the *Houſes* wherein you hold them, are not ſo Fine and Gay as many of *their* publick Churches. But you may preſently ſhew them, That the *Gaudy Trimmings* beſtow'd on ſome of *their Churches* are directly contrary to the *Church of England*. For the *Homily* againſt the *Peril of Idolatry*, expreſly declares againſt the Abuſes of *Churches* and *Temples*, by too *coſtly* and *ſumptuous* decking and adorning of them. (*w*)

(*w*) The Third Part of the *Homily* againſt *the Peril of Idolatry*.

Theſe and ſuch Points might be improved much more largely, to demonſtrate, That *you* are indeed among the TRUEST SONS of the *True Church* of *England*: But what needs any more, ſince 'tis a Maxim, (and there is no need of quoting *Avicen* for the Maxim,) *Quicquid ſufficientiæ additur, ſuperfluitati aſcribitur?* All that you will now demand of me, is to deſcribe clearly and fairly to you, *What is that* NEW CHURCH *of England* whereto you do *not* belong, and I ſuppoſe, are not very willing to belong? 'Tis very certain, there is a *Party* in the *Engliſh Nation* uſurping the Name of the *Church of England*, whereto it will be as *little* your *Honour* as 'tis your *Deſire* to be *United*; and which (as one ſays) differs as much from the OLD CHURCH *of England*, as *Nebuchadnezzar* grazing among *Beaſts* in the Field, from *Nebuchadnezzar* ſitting on his glittering *Throne*.

Know then, *my Brethren*, That by a prevailing Faction in *England*, the *Canon-Law* which pretends to Form the *Church of England*, hath been more than once altered, ſince the Family of the *Stewarts* came to ſit on the Throne of Great *Britain*; and the Alteration hath now made a *New Church* in *England* of quite another kind, than what was before. There is now eſtabliſhed by Law a *National Church*, which the *Canons* do (tho' Arch-Biſhop *Whitgift* a little before durſt *not*,) affirm to be a *True and Apoſtolical Church*.

Church. The *Biſhops*, which before *then*, durſt as well have eaten Fire as have pretended to be as *Dioceſan Biſhops*, any other than the *King's Officers*, do by the *Canons* now lay claim unto a *Divine Right*. But becauſe it puzzles them to make the *King*, who is not a Perſon *in Orders*, the *Head of the Church*, having theſe *Officers* under him, and yet for to make the *Arch-Biſhop* of *Canterbury*, the *Head* of the Church, is *Treaſon*; *here* they are in *Confuſion*: And I ſuppoſe, you *my Brethren*, will not ask to be of *this Church* till you ſee them extricated out of this *Confuſion*. To proceed, In the *National Church* thus eſtabliſhed, there are *Twenty-ſix Dioceſſes*, which the *Canons* make *particular Churches* of the loweſt Rank; and tho' there be ſuch vaſt numbers of *Pariſhes* in theſe *Dioceſſes*, the *Canons* have utterly diveſted them of the Character of *particular Churches*, which once they had ſomething of, and they make no more than *Twenty-ſix Churches*, and no more than *Twenty-ſix Paſtors* in the whole Kingdom of *England*. The *Pariſh-Presbyters* are by the *Canons* altogether ſtripp'd of all Power to *Ordain*, or to *Confirm*, or to *Excommunicate*; tho' once there was a *Power of Juriſdiction* conceded unto *them*, which then made the Old *Non-conformiſts* to look on the *Pariſh-Miniſters* as *Paſtors*, and the *Pariſhes* as retaining the Subſtantials of *particular Churches*. You, *my Brethren*, have been ready to ſay with Dr. *Goodwin*, 'In ſome of the Pariſhes of the Kingdom, there are many godly Men that conſtantly give up themſelves unto the Worſhip 'of God in publick, and meet together in one place, to that 'end, in a conſtant way, under a godly Miniſtry whom they 'themſelves have choſen to cleave unto, (tho' they did not 'chuſe him at firſt;) theſe, notwithſtanding their mixture 'and want of Diſcipline, I never thought, for my part, but 'they were *true Churches of Chriſt*. But now the *Dioceſan Church-Government* being by *Canon* eſtabliſhed, the *Pariſhes* are no more allow'd any of them to be *particular Churches*. Arch-Biſhop *Laud* labouring for a full Settlement of this New Church-State, *periſhed in the way:* But upon the Reſtauration of King *Charles* II. the Labours of the *New Set*, for to obtain *Laud*'s Model, found more ſucceſs. In thoſe places of the *Common-Prayer*, where they found the Word [*Paſtor*,] they blotted it out, and put in *Prieſt*, or *Curate*. And in the

New Book of *Ordering Biſhops*, *Prieſts*, and *Deacons*, not only the *Execution* of the *Office*, but the very *Office* of a *Prieſt* is taken away from all that have not *Epiſcopal Ordination*. The *Epiſtles* and *Goſpels* to be formerly read at the *Ordination* of *Prieſts*, which referred unto the *Paſtoral Office*, are now to be read only at the *Conſecration* of a *Biſhop*. All *Presbyterian Ordinations* were declared null and void by the memorable *Act of Uniformity*, and they that had *no more* were pronounced as *naturally Dead*. This *Dioceſan* Church of *England*, according to *Canon*, receives to *Baptiſm* the Children of all *Parents*, (be they *Jewiſh* or *Pagan*) that are brought unto the Miniſter. And every *Baptized Inhabitant* within the *Dioceſs*, if he be not *Excommunicated*, or doth ſay, That he heartily deſires the *Lord's Supper*, is admitted unto that Sacrament alſo, if he will take it according to the *Form* in the *Liturgy*, (by the common Cuſtom of the Church,) altho' he be never ſo ungodly. Whatever Admonitions the *Rubric* or *Canons* do give againſt admitting the *Wicked* unto the *Sacraments*, 'tis yet abundantly provided in them, That the *Adminiſtrator* ſhall be uncapable of excluding the wickedeſt alive. But at the ſame time, (*x*) all thoſe who *refuſe to Kneel at the reception of the Sacrament*, or who *refuſe to be Preſent at Publick Prayers, according to the Order of the Church of* England; *which Orders be*, (*y*) *Reverently to Kneel, when the General Confeſſion, Litany, and other Prayers are read, and Stand up at the ſaying of the Belief, and Bow at the Name of Jeſus, and Say in their due place, and audibly with the Miniſter, the Confeſſion, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed, and make ſuch other Anſwers to the Publick Prayers as are appointed in the Book of Common-Prayer; all ſuch as refuſe to do any of theſe things, are to be denied the Communion; and what Miniſter ſoever ſhall wittingly admit them, he is liable to Suſpenſion.* Yea, whoſoever affirms, That the *Church of England, as by Law thus eſtabliſhed*, is not formed according to Divine Inſtitution, (or *Apoſtolical*,) is *ipſo facto* to be looked upon as *Excommunicated*. (*z*) This is the *Roaring* of the Eccleſiaſtical *Canons*, and the *Clergy* by their Oath of *Canonical Obedience*, are ſworn to obſerve theſe as well as the reſt of the *Canons*. *My Brethren*, while you belong to the CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF

(*x*) See *Can.* 27.

(*y*) See *Can.* 18.

(*z*) See *Can.* 3, 4, 6, 7.

OF ENGLAND, you have all the reaſon imaginable to hear it, and bear it, and own it patiently, if you be told that you do not belong unto this DIOCESAN CHURCH OF ENGLAND. For, *Firſt*, If I be not miſtaken, this preſumptuous CANONICAL CHURCH OF ENGLAND has *Excommunicated* the beſt of *Princes*, (notwithſtanding its pretended *Loyalty*,) if they do but offer to conteſt any Part of its Conſtitution; and it will be no diſhonour unto *you* to be partakers with ſuch illuſtrious Heads, in ſuffering theſe *Contradictions of Sinners*. Perhaps you'll be ſurprized at this; but if any *Princes* or *Parliaments*, who declare, That they who cannot uſe the *Ceremonies* of the *Church of England*, may be Men of a very *good Conſcience*, eſcape an *Excommunication* by the *Sixth Canon* of the *Church*, which is, *Whoſoever ſhall hereafter affirm, That the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of* England *by Law eſtabliſhed, are ſuch as being commanded by lawful Authority, Men who are zealouſly and godlily affected, may not with any good Conſcience approve them, uſe them, or ſubſcribe unto them, let him be Excommunicated* ipſo facto: I doubt the *Eighth Canon* bears too hard upon them. According to that, *Whoſoever ſhall hereafter affirm or teach, That the Form and Manner of making and conſecrating Biſhops, Prieſts, or Deacons, containeth any thing in it that is repugnant unto the Word of God, let them be Excommunicated* ipſo facto, *and not be reſtor'd until be repent, and publickly revoke ſuch his wicked Errour.* That *Form* does aſſert, That *Biſhops* and *Prieſts* are diſtinct Orders in *Chriſt's Church*; and that it is *evident unto all Men diligently reading Holy Scripture*, that from the *Apoſtles time* they have been ſo. Now ſuppoſe any *Princes* give the *Royal Aſſent* unto an *Act* for the extirpation of *Biſhops* in one of the Three *Kingdoms*; have they not very emphatically *taught* us, That this Aſſertion in the *Form of conſecrating Biſhops and Prieſts*, is not according to the *Word of God*? Have they not very ſufficiently affirmed, That the *Word of God* obliges us not for to acknowledge *Biſhops* of an *Order diſtinct* from other *Miniſters* in the *Church of Chriſt*? We'll ſuppoſe they have ſomewhere or other in expreſs Terms, (*a*) *aboliſhed Prelacy and Superiority in any Office in the Church above Presbyters*; and declared and ordained the

(*a*) They are the expreſs Words of the *Act aboliſhing Prelacy*, July 5. 1689.

(*b*) *Govern-*

(*b*) The *Act reſtoring Preſbytery*, July 25. 1689.

(*b*) *Government of the Church* there, by *Preſbyters without Biſhops, to be the only true and proper Government thereof.* I am certain, this is to proclaim it with a witneſs, That *the Superiority of Biſhops, as an Order above Preſbyters, is not Inſtituted in the Word of God.* And at the ſame time it is to maintain, *That the Doctrine of the Form of making Biſhops and Prieſts, which aſſerts that Superiority of Order to be of Divine Right, is repugnant unto the Word of God.* Theſe *Princes* it ſeems, (which indeed I abhor to mention) ſtand excommunicated *ipſo facto*, by the *Eighth* Canon of the *Church of England*, until they *repent and publickly revoke the wicked Errours* committed in aboliſhing that *Prelacy*.

This CANONICAL CHURCH continuing to offer ſuch Affronts unto Majeſty, you may well decline to be any Part of it, until they *repent and publickly revoke their wicked Canons*. But that which may confirm you in this averſion to that *Church*, is the wrong which thoſe *Canons* do to all the *Miniſters* of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in the World. For according to *them*, none of the *Scotch*, or *Dutch*, or *French Miniſters*, nor any of *your own*, are *true Miniſters* of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, while they want *Epiſcopal Ordination*. Albeit, the famous Mr. *Selden* has out of *Eutychius* proved, That not only *Biſhops*, but *Patriarchs* themſelves, were in the Primitive Times *Ordained* by *Preſbyters*; yet now, forſooth, according to our *New Church*, none may be owned for ſo much as *Preſbyters*, but ſuch as have been *Ordained* by *Dioceſan Biſhops*. And therefore, altho' this *Canonical Church* will admit a *Popiſh Prieſt* upon his *Abjuration*, to be a Miniſter without *Re-ordination*, it will not without *Re-ordination*, admit any of theſe who are the beſt of *Proteſtants*. Yea, and when this *Church* has admitted any unto its *Miniſtry*, it preſently ſtrips them of the *Rights* that are eſſential to all *true Miniſters* of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. And here I will not inſiſt on this, That by the *Canons* of this *Church*, its own Miniſters have not ſo much as liberty for one *Occaſional Prayer* of their own left unto them. All the *Conformiſts* are by the *Thirty-ſixth Canon* to ſubſcribe *ex animo*, a *Covenant*, That *they will uſe the Form in the Book of Common-Prayer, preſcribed in Publick Prayer and Adminiſtration of the Sacraments, and* NONE OTHER. Indeed a *Cuſtom* for Miniſters to

pray

pray without Book in the *Pulpit*, is connived at; but in as much as they are *Publick Prayers*, I know others beſides Mr. *Baxter*, who doubt them to be a breach of the *Canon-Covenant*. I paſs from this, to ſay, I ſuppoſe you are deſirous to acknowledge all the *Pariſh-Presbyters* faithfully feeding their willing Flocks in the Realm, notwithſtanding their *Conformity* to be *True Miniſters* of the Goſpel; but their own *Canons*, even thoſe to which they themſelves have *ſworn*, do all they can to forbid your doing ſo. For *you*, and *they* too, muſt readily own, That unto the Office of a *Miniſter* of the *Goſpel*, here are two things *Eſſential*, namely, *Obligation* to *Teach*, and *Authority* to *Rule* the Flock. Whereas the *Canons*, whatever they *require* in ſome *Clauſes*, do evidently *releaſe* the Pariſh-Miniſter from *Obligation* to *Teach*, by providing, *That the Sacraments are not to be refuſed at the Hands of Unpreaching Miniſters*. And the whole *Authority* to *Rule*, is by the *Canons* reſerved unto the *Biſhop*, to be executed by his *Lay-Chancellor*; ſo that the *Pariſh-Miniſter* cannot exclude the verieſt *Infidel* in the World from the *Sacraments*, if a certain *Lay-Chancellor* do order his Reception. Briefly, No Ordained *Prieſt* may take upon him, to Expound any *Scripture*, or *Matter*, or *Doctrine*, (or do any more than read) ſo much as to his own *Family*, till he have a *Licenſe* from his *Ordinary*. And he *then* too has no more Power than any *Lay-man* to *Cenſure* an *Offender*, or to judge who are worthy to be *Cenſured*. Tho' the *Rubric* and *Canon* do ſeem ſometimes to favour the *Significancy* of the *Curates*, yet elſewhere it the more inexcuſably renders them utterly *Inſignificant*. Doubtleſs you will wonder how that the *Clergy* themſelves can with *Patience* endure to be ſo *nullified*, as they are by this their *Canonical Church*, or to ſee themſelves more honoured by *you* that are *Non-conformiſts* than they are by their own *Canons!* But you are ſenſible what *Force* it is that obliges them unto their *Patience*. To ſee the *Miniſters* of the Goſpel ſo *Degraded* as they are by the *Canons*, gives Offence unto *you*, if not unto *them*; and methinks it ſhould be no Offence unto *them*, that *you* take this Offence on *their* behalf.

A Third Prejudice that you'll eaſily take up againſt this CANONICAL CHURCH, is the *Number* and *Figure* of thoſe many other good Men, (beſides *Princes* and *Parliaments*,) whom they have *Excommunicated*. This *Laodicean Church* may admire her own *Charity*, (that is to ſay, the *Eaſineſs* of her *Diſcipline* as well as the *Openneſs* of her *Communion* towards the worſt of Men,) but ſhe has the moſt *Excommunicating* and moſt *Anathematizing Charity* that ever was in the World. For by the *Canons* of that Church, 'Whoever ſhall affirm, (*c*) That 'the *Church of England* by Law eſtabliſhed, is not an '*Apoſtolical Church*, or that its Worſhip is Corrupt, or 'that any of the 39 Articles are in any part Erroneous, 'or that the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Church of Eng-* 'land may not be uſed with a good Conſcience, or that 'the Government of the Church by *Arch-Biſhops*, *Bi-* 'ſhops, *&c.* is repugnant to the Word of God, or that 'the *Form or Manner of making or conſecrating of Bi-* 'ſhops, *Prieſts, and Deacons*, containeth any thing in it 'repugnant to the Word of God, all theſe are to be Ex- 'communicated *ipſo facto*. Now, Sirs, you'll find perhaps the bigger Part of the godly People in *England*, even among the *Conformiſts* themſelves, to be by one or other of theſe Clauſes *Excommunicated*: That is to ſay, they are *Excommunicated* out of the CANONICAL CHURCH into the CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF ENGLAND: And I hope they will be content with their Condition, and not *thruſt* themſelves upon the Party that has *Excommunicated* them. However, that *you* may be ſure of being driven both *out of*, and *into* the ſame *Church* with *them*, hark how theſe *Canons* do further *Thunder!* (*d*) 'Whoſoever ſhall maintain, That 'there are within the *Realm*, [and Note by the way, That all the *Engliſh* Plantations, particularly *Barbadoes*, *Jamaica*, *Bermudas*, *New-England*, *New-York*, *Virginia*, *Carolina*, all which have *Non-conformiſt Meetings* in them, do belong to the *Eccleſiaſtical Realm* of *England*, as being Part of the Biſhop of *London*'s Dioceſs;] 'other 'Meetings, Aſſemblies, or Congregations of the King's- 'born

(*c*) See *Can.* 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

(*d*) See *Can.* 11.

'born Subjects, than ſuch as by the Law of the Land 'are held and allowed, which may rightly challenge to 'themſelves the Name of *true and lawful Churches*, let 'them be *Excommunicated*, and not reſtored but by the '*Arch-Biſhop*, after Repentance and Publick Revocation 'of ſuch *their wicked Errours*. You ſee, Sirs, that either you are that *Church of England* which the Law *holds* and *allows*, or elſe you ſtand *Excommunicated*. But I aſſure my ſelf, you are not ambitious to be reckoned of that Party which has *Excommunicated* all the Congregations of the *Non-conformiſts*. Nor will it bring you under the Brand of *Schiſmaticks*, if being thus Excommunicated *ipſo facto*, you ſettle your ſelves in the Communion of *Churches* that will receive you. And this the rather, leſt you ſhould be found in the TREASONABLE PLOT, whereof the famous Mr. *Baxter* among others, has convicted that Party, namely, That of attempting a *Revolt unto a Foreign Juriſdiction*. Albeit the *Canons* of the Church, (and the *Articles* alſo,) whereto theſe Men are *ſworn*, do moſt expreſly renounce all ſuch *Foreign Juriſdiction*; yet ſuch is the *Confuſion* whereinto theſe perfidious Builders of *Babel* run themſelves, that according to the *New Church of England*, (*e*) 'The Col-'ledge of *Biſhops* thro' all the World, are the Supream, 'Univerſal, Viſible Sovereign of the *Catholick Church*, 'having power of *Univerſal Government*; That they are 'to exerciſe it in *General Councils*, where every Biſhop 'is by Office the *Repreſentative* of his *Dioceſan Church*; 'That theſe Biſhops are to have *Metropolitans* and *Patriarchs*, and the Pope of *Rome* is to be their *Uniting* 'Head, and *ex officio* the Preſident of the *Councils*; That 'in the Intervals of theſe *Councils*, they are *per literas* '*formatas*, to exerciſe their Power over all the World; 'That all that will not unite with the *Church* of *Rome*, '(which is to be diſtinguiſhed from the *Court* of *Rome*,) 'on theſe Terms, are *Schiſmaticks*; but they that *will*, 'are no *Papiſts*; none being *Papiſts* but they that are 'for the *Pope's abſolute Power* above *Canons* or *Councils*; 'That the Church of *Rome* is a *true Church*, and if it 'will

(*e*) See Mr. *Baxter's* true Hiſtory of *Councils* defended. *p.* 19. And his whole Book, *Againſt Revolt unto a Foreign Juriſdiction*, dedicated unto the late A. B. of *Canterbury*.

'will not impose the *Innovations* of the last Four hun-'dred Years, it may be *united* with; but the *Protestant* 'Churches, which are destitute of *Diocesan Bishops*, are no 'true *Churches*, nor their Pastors true *Ministers*, nor have 'they any true *Sacraments*, nor Covenant-Promise of Sal-'vation.

Of such a Church as this, methinks I hear *you*, and the bigger and better Part of your Brethren, yet groaning under the Shackles of *Conformity*, resolve, *Come not into their Secret, O my Soul, unto their Assembly! my Tongue, be not thou united!* The most flourishing and glorious *Island* in the World, will be in perpetual danger of becoming a *French Province*, except the *Non-conformists* be counted better Parts of the *Church of England*, than the Men of such *dangerous Principles*; and except the Sacramental TEST be therefore taken off. But there is the True CHRISTIAN CHURCH of *England*, which would have the *Reformation of Religion* carried on according to the *Direction* of the Sacred *Scriptures*, and the *Intention* of the first *Reformers*, and counts not *Christianity* to lye in vain *Ceremony*; which looks on *Diocesan Bishops* as made such by the *King* and the *National Church-Government*, as an *human*, tho' *useful* Policy; which owns the rest of the sound *Protestants* in the World for *Brethren*, and would have the Qualifications for the *Pastoral Office*, and for *Communion* in special Ordinances, to be no other than what the Lord Jesus Christ hath instituted; which, in fine, is against bringing a Yoke of *Slavery* upon the brave English Nation in *Spirituals* or *Temporals*. And *of this Church ye are*. God, and the King, and the Parliament, and all sober Men, will reckon you a valuable Part of this *Church*; while a certain *Hectoring* sort of People in the World, that would be thought the only *Church of England*, deserve to be counted rather the *Wens*, than any *Parts* of it, and indeed *know not what it is*. I beseech you, Sirs, let not the CHURCH OF ENGLAND become a Name of such a *Treasonable Importance*, that it must belong to none but that Faction, whose Religion lyes in *Sainting* their Martyr *Charles* I. whose

whoſe Reign was ſpent in an unnatural manner, plotting and contriving to undermine and ſubvert the Religion, Laws, and Liberties of the Engliſh Nation; and who notwithſtanding the *Sham* of the *Icon Baſilike*, it's feared would have been another *John Baſilovitz*, if he had proſpered in his *unnatural War* againſt the *Parliament*.

And now, *my Brethren*, if any go to ſeduce you from your own REFORMED CONGREGATIONS into the more CEREMONIOUS ASSEMBLIES in the *Church of England*, you are furniſhed with an *Anſwer*. Let your *Anſwer* be, That you are of the *Church of England*, and that you cannot better expreſs your being *ſo*, than by keeping with your own REFORMED CONGREGATIONS. If the Biſhop of *London* ſhould be offended at the Governours of *Barbadoes*, or *Bermudas*, or *Carolina*, for worſhipping of God in the Meetings of the *Nonconformiſts* there, the Gentlemen may truly ſay in their defence, That they worſhipp'd God with the *trueſt Part of the Church of England* in thoſe Parts of *America*.

Be adviſed, *my Brethren*, to carry it with all poſſible *Moderation* and *Civility* towards thoſe that can *Conform* unto *Ceremonies* farther than *you*; *Be gentle unto all Men*. But yet continue ſtedfaſt in your preſent *Non-conformity*. The Day is at hand that will juſtifie your *Stedfaſtneſs*. Even at this Day, the moſt *Conformable* themſelves confeſs, That the *Rites* whereto you are *Non-conformiſts*, are *indifferent Things*, and the Worſhip of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is as *well* without them as with them. Why ſhould you then add thoſe *Rites*, which in your *Conſciences* are not ſo *indifferent* as the *Confeſſion* of the *Conformable* would render them, and which will defile your *Worſhip*? Even Biſhop *Sanderſon* himſelf expreſly ſays, *If any Man ſhall uſe them with an opinion, as if God's Service could not be rightly performed without them, doubtleſs the uſe of ſuch Ceremonies by reaſon of ſuch his Opinion, would be ſuperſtitious unto him*. Thus by the *Confeſſion* of the *Conformable*, you are *well* as you *are*. Know when you are *well*. More *Conformity* won't make you *better*. And if the *Rites* are ſo *Indifferent*, why ſhould

thoſe that urge them for the ſake thereof, make a *Difference? Let them return unto you; there is no Cauſe why you ſhould go over unto them. Reaſon* and *Juſtice* will one Day take place: The Day foretold by the *Biſhop* of *Worceſter* before he was a *Biſhop*, 'God will one 'Day convince Men, That the *Unity* of the *Church* lyes 'more in the *Unity* of *Faith* and *Affection*, than in the '*Uniformity* of doubtful *Rites* and *Ceremonies* (*f*). You will then be owned in the *Church of England*; yea, the the *Partition-Wall* between *you* and all the other ſincere *Proteſtants* in the *Engliſh* Nation, will be taken down. This is the Prayer and Hope of, *my Brethren*,

(*f*) *Stillingfleet's Iren.* p. 121.

Your Hearty Servant,

(*Neither* willing *nor* worthy *to be any further known among you.*)

Philalethes.

F I N I S.

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